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Building trust and speed on the home front

By Phil Manson, First Army Public Affairs

Stating that there is “no rear area in the war on terror,” Maj. Gen. Jay Yingling, deputy commanding general, First U.S. Army welcomed local leaders to Tuesday’s First Army Open House.

Leaders from Clayton, Fulton and Henry Counties joined Yingling to learn how First Army executes Military Support to Civilian Authorities (MSCA) and how that mission impacts them right here in Atlanta.

Attendees were given briefings concerning First Army’s missions, but with an emphasis on Homeland Defense.

Citing such businesses as Coca-Cola, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and CNN, Yingling said Atlanta has plenty of targets for Osama bin Laden to attack.

“Al-Qeada goes for maximum loss of life and property and maximum media exposure,” said Yingling. “With CNN headquarters here, Atlanta is a prime target for bin Laden.

Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré, commanding general, First U.S. Army, sponsored the event because he wanted local leaders and first responders to meet and greet now so if and when a disaster happens locally everyone won’t meet for the first time at the disaster scene.

“Building trust and speed is our goal,” explained Yingling. “By us developing strong working relationships with the leaders and first responders here, we develop trust between First Army and local communities,” Yingling said. “Once that trust is there, it will increase the speed at which we can respond correctly to support our civilian authorities.”

Attendees agreed that establishing contacts now is key to an effective, coordinated response.



Mayor Willie Oswalt (left) listens to Maj. Gen. Jay Yingling, deputy commanding general, First U.S. Army, during the First Army Open House on Homeland Defense. Photo by Phil Manson



Locust Grove, Ga., Mayor Lorene Lindsey and Jesse Patton, Locust Grove police chief attended the First Army Open House on Homeland Defense held at Fort Gillem, Ga. Photo by Phil Manson

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Commander's Corner



Leaders and leadership responsibility

As Commander of First U.S. Army, I expect leaders to lead. Our nation is at war. And, as leaders in First Army, it is our mission as well as our responsibility to provide combat ready forces. It's our mission and it is what we will do. Combat ready forces are highly trained forces, well equipped forces, highly motivated forces. The success of any mission lies in skillful leadership. Strong leadership will enable the Army to operate as an organization fully capable of meeting any challenge.

Great leaders are able to visualize an operation from its current state to an end state; to make qualitatively better decisions than can an enemy; and to lead Soldiers in peace and combat. The complexity of the military profession requires leaders who can make the most of physical, intellectual, and moral resources. As leaders, you have an impact on each mobilized and deployed Soldier. You are responsible for their successful mission performance and safe return home. You must not allow Soldiers to go into harms way unprepared.

I challenge all levels of leadership to get fully engaged in the process of training our Soldiers and units for maximum readiness.

I have the utmost confidence in the ability of leaders in this Command to do the Army's work in superb fashion. You must see first, understand first, act first.

Russel L. Honoré
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding

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Camp Atterbury gives area troops taste of Iraq fight

By Erica Blake
Blade staff writer

Army Reserve Spec. Mike Kean peered around, his cold hands tightly gripping the handle of the M-249 machine gun resting atop his Hum-vee, number seven in a convoy of eight.

He was providing cover as one of his fellow Soldiers from the 983rd Engineer Battalion slung a Soldier killed in action over his shoulder. He watched as men and women screaming Arabic edged closer and closer to another vehicle in the convoy that had been disabled by an improvised explosive device.

He also kept his eye on a pickup in the distance that a fellow gunner had sprayed with bullets after he saw hooded men standing in the bed firing machine guns in their direction.

Specialist Kean, 25, of the 983rd's Company B, was submerged in a different world among the plywood structures, barrel fires, and other conditions similar to those found in many small, rural Iraqi villages.

But the Monroe man wasn't in the Persian Gulf. He really was not that far from home.

On the 33,000-acre grounds of the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center in Edinburgh, a small Indiana town about 20 miles south of Indianapolis and a 4 1/2-hour drive from Toledo, Specialist Kean and the other Soldiers of the 983rd were being trained to deal with what they might encounter in Iraq.

And for members of the 983rd Engineering Battalion, Iraq - not home - is their next stop. "This is the real deal. It's what we've trained for and what will keep us alive," Specialist Kean, the father of a 2-year-old boy, said of the convoy exercises that employ civilians, including Iraqi nationals, to act as villagers and insurgents.

The situation that Specialist Kean and his fellow soldiers encountered on a recent brisk afternoon in southern Indiana is something American forces are confronted with in Iraq every day. But in the war of Iraq, there are no blanks used, and no fake bombs.

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More community-based programs to treat injured Soldiers

By Sgt. 1st Class Tammy M. Jarrett

More Soldiers in the Medical Holdover Program may soon be able to receive healthcare in their hometowns as the Army expands the Community Based Health Care Organization program from five to eight organizations.

CBHCOs will open in Virginia and Alabama around Feb. 7 and a third in Utah around March 1, medical officials said during a media roundtable briefing Dec. 2.

The CBHCO program is an integral part of the medical holdover program and was originally started to relieve pressure on medical facilities and installations, said Col. Mike Deaton from the Army Surgeon General Office.

"It is also a means for us to provide care to Soldiers while they live at home and work at nearby military facilities," said Deaton.

The current five programs, operating in Florida, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts and Wisconsin, service a total of 23 states and cares for more than 1,100 Soldiers.

Deaton said the success of the Community Based Health Care Initiative pilot program led to the Army to expand the program to provide regional medical coverage across all 50 states.

"They have evolved from a pilot initiative to be an integral part of the MHO mission," Deaton said. They ensure a high standard of medical care—bottom line, the CBHCO is a success story for the Army, its Soldiers and their families."

Medical holdover Soldiers are mobilized reserve-component Soldiers who remain on active duty to receive medical treatment. Deaton said the program is the Army leadership's top priority, and they are continuing to evaluate and improve the program.

"The Army is committed to taking care of its people and to providing the best possible healthcare—regardless of the Soldier's component and regardless of the nature of the illness or injury," said Deaton. "Our Soldiers have volunteered to stand in harms way for our nation and they deserve the best in healthcare."

One such Soldier is Spc. Logan G. Brown, who received multiple injuries July 22 when his convoy was

ambushed in Iraq July 22. Brown received emergency surgery and eventually sent back to Fort Hood. The El Dorado, Ark., native now receives his care at CBHCO at Camp Robinson, Ark. He said when he returned from his 30-day convalescent leave from Fort Hood, his paperwork had been processed.

Brown said he couldn't ask for a better program. He's able to be with the people he loves; he didn't get thrown back into civilian life and the care and the leadership is genuine.

"You can tell they [case managers and doctors and platoon sergeants] really care about the Soldier and it means a lot to come home," said the humvee gunner with the 3-153rd Infantry, 39th Infantry Brigade.

Staff Sgt. Roberto Scott agrees with Brown on the quality of care provided by the CBHCOs. He received injuries to his neck, back and right arm in a helicopter accident in Afghanistan Sept. 17. He was medically evacuated back to Fort Drum, N.Y., where he spent nine months being treated for his injuries before entering the CBHCO at Hanscom Air Force, Mass.

Scott said he was amazed, from day one, by the quality treatment he has been receiving.

"I didn't believe I could find such healthcare," said the guardsman with E Battery (TA), 101st Field Artillery. "They really care about the health and welfare of each one of us."

Scott said being able to be with his family is key to his recuperation.

"By going home every night I feel that my condition, my well-being is much better," he said.

The program works either by assigning Soldiers to a military facility within 50 miles of their homes or finding a doctor who takes TRICARE. The case managers work at the CBHCO and the Soldiers are administratively handled.

Sgt. Chris Dunbar, a reservist with the 810 Military Police Company, Tampa, Fla., found out about CBHCO through a case manager at Fort Stewart, Ga. He fractured his jaw while unloading equipment in Iraq May 4. The combat MP said he didn't have a pleasant experience at Fort Stewart.

"The medical treatment I received was like in a factory setting," Dunbar, "no emotion, no human passion."

See injured Soldiers, p4

Small base now big asset to military, local communities

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA
American Forces Press Service

For more than 50 years, the only life here was on weekends and for two weeks in the summer. Now, you actually have to keep a watchful eye for marching troops and military convoys at the four-way stop entering the camp. For the first time since the Korean War, Camp Atterbury, a National Guard training center first activated June 1942 as a World War II training facility, has become an important military asset. Today, it prepares thousands of troops for deployment in the war on terror, while providing millions of dollars in economic impact to the state.

Army Col. Kenneth D. Newlin, who took command here in October 2002, said over the past two years more than 20,000 Army National Guard and Army Reserve members have been mobilized here for duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

That number is expected to remain steady as the Army presses more Guard and Reserve Soldiers into active duty and the Defense Department has called for more troops in Iraq. Roughly half of the forces serving there now are Guard and Reserve members. Newlin said the camp's gymnasium, which serves as the personnel readiness center, processes an average of 200 Soldiers each day. Often, the center operated seven days a week.

A mix of units comes here: medical, engineer, infantry, armor and even training. For example, recently the 98th Division (Institutional Training) out of New York, a unit that consists mostly of drill sergeants, deployed to help the 42nd Infantry Division train the Iraqi army.

The camp's 64 beige concrete barracks house about 4,500 soldiers from more than 39 Guard and Reserve units from across the country, part of the third rotation of troops bound for Iraq. They will spend six to eight weeks in training, learning to avoid convoy ambushes and how to identify unexploded ordnance, two of the most serious dangers they will face in duty.

Newlin said the training here is based on the 40 Warrior Tasks directed by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker. All Soldiers, regardless of specialty, must be proficient in the tasks, which include rifle and survival skills.

Besides those tasks, there are individual and collective training events in which soldiers are put in a forward operating base laid out exactly as they would

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Injured Soldiers (Con't)

Dunbar, a computer technician, now receives his medical treatment at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Fla. He also works at the CBHCO in Plant City, Fla., caring for Soldiers in the region and in processing incoming Soldiers from other mobilization stations into the program. He said the CBHCO has helped him re-adjust to civilian life. Instead of being thrown into the water, the organization is his floats.

"I get to go home, be a civilian and see my family. But during the week, I'm still doing the military thing, which helps me adjust back to having a balance," he said.

Nearly 800 additional physicians, nurses, clerks, and case managers have been hired or mobilized to help with the MHO mission. Based on projections from the Army Medical Department, the Army anticipates a peak of about 6,500 MHO patients between now and January. Once all the CBHCOs are fully open for business, future MHO Soldiers will be afforded opportunity to use them instead of military installations.

The "saturation point" for the first [CBHCOs] was a capacity of 300. This has been expanded to 500 and additional manpower was mobilized to support it them, said Col. Kevin Garrouette, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He said because all the personnel are mobilized, they can be moved around to other organizations if needed.

A \$23 million budget for next year has been set aside to run the CBHCOs, said Col. Barbara Scherb, who manages the program from Forces Command.

"This includes the infrastructure standings, sites up, computers and phone lines, the travel to move Soldiers to the special care where needed," she said, adding that healthcare will be an additional cost.

Scherb said the amount also does not include the cost to the military manpower budget in terms of the mobilized Soldiers.



Army has good jobs waiting for amputees

Sunday, December 12, 2004

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER – CLEVELAND, OH

William H. Willoughby

Regarding the Nov. 30 article "War amputees fight to get back in military" and the Dec. 5 editorial on this subject: The article introduced Plain Dealer readers to three Soldiers who became amputees in combat: Sgt. Chuck Bartles, Staff Sgt. David Chatham and Special Forces Sgt. Andy McCaffrey (whom I met at Fort Bragg last month). These men are truly great American patriots who served in very dangerous circumstances and sustained serious injuries. They also bonded with their comrades and units, embraced our Army's missions and values, and are highly motivated to continue in uniform.

President George W. Bush was correct when he said, "Today, if wounded service members want to remain in uniform and can do the job, the military tries to help them stay." That is the policy. And we certainly want Soldiers like Sgts. Bartles, Chatham and McCaffrey to stay, because they definitely add value.

The active Army totals about 500,000 personnel with as many in the reserve components. There are thousands of vital positions in the training centers and Army schools that the amputees can fill. There are also noncombat and administrative jobs in uniform or in the 200,000-strong Army civilian workforce.

Now we have 880 seriously disabled Soldiers in various stages of recuperation with a variety of injuries and limitations. The Army is working to fit those like the three sergeants back into the active Army or the civilian workforce. Although they are highly motivated to get back into the fight, it will take them a year or so to adjust to their changed status and realize that they should contribute in another way. Frankly, that was my personal experience when I accepted disability retirement in 1971 for combat injuries sustained in Vietnam.

For those who cannot stay on active duty, the secretary of the Army and the secretary of Veterans Affairs have jointly established the Disabled Soldiers Support System (DS3) to provide severely disabled Soldiers and their families a system of advocacy to assist them in their transition to the civilian community. Soldiers and families are assisted in identifying veterans service agencies and are assigned a sponsor from one of those agencies. In brief, severely disabled Soldiers will have a lifeline in times of need just as they had with the chain of command while serving in their units. The DS3 program is established to ensure that no Soldier is left behind.

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Army values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Our soldiers have more than lived up to those standards. The Army is taking care of its own. The loyalty part goes both ways.

Mr. William Willoughby is the First Army Area Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for Ohio.

Small Base (Cont)

see in Iraq. The idea is for Soldiers to "see, smell and train" in the environment they would experience in Iraq, he said.

Iraqi nationals are brought in to be role players and play the role of insurgents to make the scenario more realistic. The FOB is attacked with mortar fire, and vehicle convoys are hit with improvised explosive devices.

During one part of the training, a convoy travels through a village. There, it is stopped, and plastic explosives are set off to simulate an IED. The sound of the blast "literally rocks their world," Newlin said. "This is not just a little 'pop and drop simulator,'" he said. "The fireball cuts through the air, the black smoke billows out, and the concussion hits you in the face. Talk about shock effect; they know they just got blown up."

The Soldiers are trained to fend off such an attack. At the convoy live-fire range, Soldiers must engage targets on both sides of the vehicle, using whatever individual or crew-served weapon systems are available, from M-4, M-249, to Mark 19 and .50-caliber weapons systems.

The training is based on lessons learned from Guard and Reserve units now in Iraq, Newlin said. Some training, however, is refresher courses for tasks learned in basic training, such as first aid and radio communications. Other training, such as rappelling, is designed to build the Soldiers' confidence, Newlin explained.

Farewell ceremonies have become an almost weekly ritual here, and Camp Atterbury leaders treat each as a family affair. That's because many of the Guard and Reserve members departing are Soldiers they have served with.

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Wisconsin NG unit convoys 96 heavy trucks from Fort Benning to Charleston port for shipment to Iraq

By Phil Manson, First Army Public Affairs

There's an old Army logistics saying that goes, "nothing happens until something moves."

Well, things are moving in a big way this week for the Wisconsin National Guard's 1158th Transportation Company from Black River Falls, Beloit and Tomah, Wis.

Soldiers with the 1158th are driving 96 Heavy Equipment Trucks (HET) 407 miles from Fort Benning to their seaport of embarkation (SPOE) in Charleston, S. C. The convoy mission is a prime example of real-world training by First U.S. Army units preparing for their deployment for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

To the casual observer, it wouldn't seem to be too much trouble to just round up your Soldiers and trucks and hit the road. But, when you're moving 96 HET capable of carrying a 65-ton main battle tank, logistics and coordination can be daunting.

"Once we were given this tasking, we knew careful coordination would be extremely important to the success of the mission," explained 1st Lt. Kim A. Kleiman, unit movement officer, 4th Platoon leader, 1158th Transportation Company.

We worked extensively with Bob Silver, Bob Sorrell and their people at the 841st Transportation Battalion at the Naval Weapons Station in North Charleston, which is the destination of our convoy" Kleiman said. "We also had to coordinate with local police departments in the small towns through which the convoy passed."

Movement of the HET was broken into 12 "serials" of eight trucks each.

"Five serials of eight trucks each left Fort Benning, Ga., beginning at 4 a.m. with a half-hour interval between each serial," said Kleiman. "Four serials left the second day and three serials left a day later, Dec. 1."

Once all 96 HET vehicles arrive at port, they will be loaded onto ships bound for Kuwait. 1158th Soldiers will deploy overseas by air, later linking up with their trucks in theater. "This movement allows our Soldiers to anticipate what it will be like driving overseas," Kleiman said.

"This convoy operation is another excellent training tool. It ensures they are comfortable working with each other as well as in convoy operations."

According to Sorrell of the 841st, Kleiman and her Soldiers of the 1158th conducted the smoothest convoy operation from Fort Benning that they've been involved with.

"Lieutenant Kleiman was really on top of the operation. The advance work she and her NCOs did, and the movement of the convoy exceeded the stan-

dard for convoys of that size," Sorrell stated.



Heavy Equipment Trucks of the 1158th Transportation Company are corralled at the Naval Weapons Station, Charleston, S.C., waiting to be loaded on ships bound for Kuwait. Photo by Phil Manson

"Kleiman provided all the cargo data to us and coordinated the move-

ment to port, receipt of the HET, staging of the vehicles and final vessel upload," Sorrell said. "Everybody connected with the 1158th Transportation Company should be very proud of their work," said Sorrell.

"It was a lot of hard work and a few sleepless nights," Kleiman said, "but we accomplished the mission and I am very proud of all the members of the 1158th Transportation Company."

First U.S. Army is currently mobilizing and demobilizing nearly 25,000 Soldiers at 10 mobilization centers throughout the eastern half of the United States.



Fort Gillem wary of closures

*By Kay S. Pedrotti
For the Journal-Constitution*

Clayton County leaders are hoping for the best and preparing for the worst with Fort Gillem. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is pushing an aggressive plan to close or realign some military bases. In military lingo, it's known as Base Realignment and Closing, or BRAC.

"It is a reality that we could face significant realignment, closure or both," said Tom Salter, leader of the Clayton-based Save Forts McPherson and Gillem Foundation. "We need to learn quickly how to mitigate the impact and perhaps profit from it, in the event that Georgia takes a hit."

The Defense Department will set a list for potential closures and realignments. Once a base is placed on the list, set to be released in May, "it will be extremely difficult to get off of it," said CeCe Siracuse of Hurt Norton and Associates, a firm that contracts with communities and the military to facilitate base closings. She spoke last week at a forum in Atlanta.

Local leaders have worked to save Fort Gillem because the base is so important to the local economy. The combined financial impact for Fort Gillem and Fort McPherson in Atlanta is about \$671 million.

Siracuse said "maneuver bases" — such as Georgia's Fort Benning near Columbus and Fort Stewart in Hinesville — probably are most likely to be spared. The presence on those bases of "troops ready to be deployed" is not easy to duplicate, she said.

Forts McPherson and Gillem are not maneuver bases but contain groups that are crucial for the nation's military capability and homeland security, Salter said. For instance, Fort McPherson is home to the U.S. Army Forces Command, responsible for the activities in war and peace for nearly 800,000 Army soldiers around the world.

Communities need to plan for property transfers, land use, appropriate redevelopment and environmental concerns, said Bob Moeller of Booz Hamilton Allen of McLean, Va. The firm distributed information showing that once a base is declared "excess," it can be transferred to a federal agency for another use.

If not used by another agency, it is declared "surplus," and then can be conveyed almost free for certain public uses, or the service receives fair market value for its property from other public bodies (cities, counties, water authorities, etc.) in a "negotiated sale." In a "public sale," the property is auctioned to private or public parties with the fair market value a starting point.

Moeller said most communities form a team of public and private interests to handle a base closing. That team also may hire a management firm or function under a government-appointed land redevelopment board made to deal with multi-jurisdictional issues.

The team or board then determines the best use for the base land, and how to accomplish the necessary transfers and redevelopment.

Building trust (Cont.)

Locust Grove Police Chief Jesse Patton was pleased to learn that MSCA is a primary First Army mission.

"I didn't realize First Army had the resources available to assist during a disaster, and (the open house) has been very educational learning how they can help us," explained Patton.

Patsy Jo Hilliard, the mayor of East Point, Ga., thanked Yingling and the First Army staff for putting on the open house because it allows all the various city and county departments to coordinate and unify disaster responses.

"No one was on the same frequency after September 11," Hilliard stated. "This open house lets us talk with First Army folks *and* our local first responders so if a disaster does strike, we'll be ready."

Tim Robinson, a captain with the Clayton County Police, expressed satisfaction with the open house.

"It's comforting and reassuring to know that we can contact First Army and they, with their resources, are able to assist with whatever the problem may be," said Robinson.

Building trust and speed between First Army and civilian authorities to respond effectively to any crisis that may arise is First Army's mission on the home front of the 21st century.

Atterbury (Cont)

In Iraq, when roadside bombs detonate, Soldiers sometimes die.

"You control that battlefield over there; don't let them," Master Sgt. David Fields, an Army trainer, told members of Company B after the training exercise. "Watch out for each other, correct each other. Do your piece of the puzzle. If everybody does their piece of the puzzle, we'll get out of there."

The 983rd, which has an authorized force of 630, was mobilized this summer and reported to Camp Atterbury in late October. The battalion's headquarters and one company are based in Monclova Township. Another company is based in Lima, Ohio, and a third in Southfield, Mich.

The group is expected to be sent to Iraq before the end of this month for a one-year deployment - the unit's first deployment in an armed conflict since World War II.

The engineer battalion will serve as support for reconstruction efforts, such as building roads and infrastructure in Iraqi cities.

Also training at Camp Atterbury are about 480 members of the Ohio Army National Guard's 612th Engineer Battalion, based in Walbridge with companies in Tiffin and Norwalk, and the Ohio National Guard 211th Maintenance Company based in Newark, Ohio.

Capt. Mickey Avalos, 36, of Swanton is commander of the 983rd headquarters company. The assistant principal at Bedford High School, Captain Avalos said his troops have undergone significant training to prepare them for war. A reservist since 1990, Captain Avalos saw action overseas as a lieutenant during Operation Desert Storm. Many of his Soldiers, he said, have not.

The camp is one of two training facilities in the country that have been mobilized to prepare troops for Iraq and Afghanistan, said Maj. Mike Brady, the camp's public affairs officer. Since February, 2003, the training center has deployed more than 17,300 National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers.

The training center also has provided support training and facilities for other military service branches, including the Navy SEALs, Marines, and Air Force, as well as local law enforcement and first responders.

On the defensive live fire range at Camp Atterbury, Spec. Sharon Stewart, 24, of Toledo dropped to the ground with her M-16A2 in hand and shot at pop-up targets in the distance. She emptied her magazine - 20 rounds - and looked back as squad leader Sgt. Richard Hatch ran behind her asking Soldiers how much ammunition they had left. "We're black," he told his Soldiers, referring to the military term signifying less than 10 percent of ammunition is left. "We're toast. Get your bayonets out," he joked.

Sergeant Hatch, 36, a husband, father of two young children, and surgical technologist at St. Charles Mercy Hospital in Oregon, said training is where the kinks are worked out.

"We try to get as much training as possible in what little time we have," the Lambertville resident said.

Specialist Stewart, an Owens Community College nursing student, said the training has been vital in preparing her and her fellow Soldiers for what lies ahead in Iraq. The mother of a 21-month-

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old son, she said she's convinced her battalion will be successful overseas and is confident everybody will return home safely.

But she knows she won't be home for Christmas, a reality she's still getting used to, just as her aunt is getting used to caring for her toddler while she is deployed. "In terms of training, I'm ready," said the 1998 graduate of St. Ursula Academy. "Mentally, it's still kind of unbelievable that I'm going."

Lt. Col. Kevin McLinn, commander of the entire 983rd Battalion, returned recently from a two-week trip to Iraq, where he was briefed on how to ensure a "seamless" transfer of power from the Cincinnati-based 512th Engineering Battalion that soon will be on its way home.

"Everybody is waiting to hear what I learned: 'How is the food? What are the living conditions? Did I get shot at?'" said Colonel McLinn, 44, of Indianapolis. "The food is fantastic, and no, I actually never got shot at," he said.

Major Brady said the Army constantly updates training exercises based on feedback from Soldiers serving in Iraq. This gives newly deployed Soldiers the chance to anticipate what lies ahead.

For members of the 983rd, who last saw their families over Thanksgiving, the lessons learned at Camp Atterbury are designed to keep them alive. "This type of training has been brought on by experiences of

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S.C. guardsman garners medals for actions during convoy attack

By Spc. Jessika Ross

Capt. Matthew Delk, a native of Roanoke Rapids, S.C., received a Purple Heart and an Army Commendation Medal with Valor device during a ceremony held Oct. 10 in Mosul, Iraq, for his actions on April 20 when a roadside bomb hit his convoy.

The Valor device is awarded as a single, one-time decoration, and recognizes those individuals who were awarded a decoration as a result of direct combat with an enemy force. It denotes heroism or valorous acts.

Delk is the commander of the 268th Engineer Detachment (Firefighters), a National Guard unit from Columbia, S.C.

While participating in operations to promote stability and peace in Iraq, Delk's four-vehicle convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device, destroying the first vehicle and disabling two others that were subsequently engulfed in flames. Delk helped remove casualties from the burning vehicles and conducted first aid. He instructed the other Soldiers to set up security and fend off insurgents in a firefight that lasted more than an hour before reinforcements arrived.

Delk suffered severe burns to his arms, face and chest during the attack. He was evacuated to the United States for medical treatment. After four months of medical attention and physical therapy, Delk returned to Iraq to finish his tour with the 268th.

"I am beside myself about how lucky I am to be alive. There is a purpose in everything. I think my purpose that day was to get those guys out of the vehicles. Everyone was a hero that day," Delk said.

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Capt. Matthew Delk stands at attention while being pre-

sented a Purple Heart and the Army Commendation Medal with Valor device for actions taken when his convoy came under attack in Mosul, Iraq, on April 20. *Photo by Spc. Jessika Ross*

Atterbury (Cont)

Soldiers right out of the country," said Staff Sgt. Michael Bodine, 39, formerly of Clyde, Ohio, and now a resident of Fort Wayne, Ind. "It's vital to integrate this into training."

On the grounds of the mock Iraqi village, more than a dozen people stood around waiting for the first convoy of Humvees to drive through.

The civilians on the battlefield - are contracted by the military to serve as actors creating situations Soldiers will come across in Iraq. The Soldiers drove through once, weapons ready, and were greeted by a waving and cheering crowd. Some Soldiers waved back.

The second time through, however, things turned nasty. There was an explosion simulating a roadside bomb and training officers stopped one of

the convoy vehicles.

"You've just been killed," a Soldier was told.

Hiding in the plywood structures, actors portraying Iraqi villagers recognized their cue to approach the convoy to verbally harass and physically confront the Soldiers.

Raisan Al Shimray, a tall and imposing man, led the way. Mr. Al Shimray left Iraq after Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in 1990. After spending nearly eight years in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Al Shimray came to the United States. He became an American citizen on Aug. 7, 2003.

This fall, while working at a Cracker Barrel Old Country Store and Restaurant in Kentucky, Mr. Al Shimray learned from a friend that the Army was looking for civilians to help train Soldiers. He signed up, and has

See Atterbury, p. 12

First Army takes Christmas to local school

Photos by Phil Manson

For the second year in what has become an annual event, First Army employees have provided gifts for students at Fountain Elementary School. Fountain Elementary and First Army headquarters (on Fort Gillem) are located in Forest Park, Ga., and have shared a Partner-In-Education relationship since 1995. Names of students are provided by the school and placed on an angel tree in the lobby. Employees choose a name from the tree and purchase a gift. This is an all volunteer program administered by First Army's Public Affairs Office.



Soldiers played Santa for children recently at Fountain Elementary School, First U.S. Army's Partner in Education.



Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Collins, office of the Inspector General, First U.S. Army, carries a load of presents for the students at Fountain Elementary School. He is assisted by Sgt. 1st Class LaTonya McSmith of First Army's Training Division.



Sgt. 1st Class Gary Collins, Office of the Inspector General, First U.S. Army, and Kyla Reyes, a first-grader at Fountain Elementary School, play with Kyla's Beanie-Baby toy given to her by Soldiers and civilians of First U.S. Army.



Sgt. 1st Class Debra Thames, supply sergeant, First U.S. Army, brightens Myra Resendiz's day with a gift for the holidays from the Soldiers and civilians of First U.S. Army.

Maj. Susan M. Scott, Surgeon's Office, First U.S. Army, shares a holiday smile with Fountain Elementary student Eduardo Jimenez.



Small Base (Cont)

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"It tough here," Newlin said. "About everyone I've known has deployed somewhere in some fashion or capacity. "I'm proud to be training and mobilizing them," he continued, "because I truly look at every one of these Soldiers as a brother and a friend. And in many cases, most of them are."

Newlin said the 113th Engineer Battalion, 38th Infantry Division, Indiana Army National Guard, is currently training at the camp mobilizing for duty in Iraq. It is the unit where he learned to lead Soldiers as a noncommissioned officer, and he commanded until just two years ago.

While the units here await marching orders, Soldiers spend off-duty time at the few facilities and activities the camp offers -- a shoppette, a physical fitness center, an "All Ranks" club, a laundry, a barbershop and a movie theater. Newlin said that though Camp Atterbury is small in size aspirations here are big. Since the war on terror began, the installation has become a viable asset to the military.

In February 2002, the Army mobilized Camp Atterbury, the first National Guard mobilization station to be called into service. As a Forces Command Power Support Platform, Camp Atterbury serves as a mobilization and training site for Guard and Reserve troops preparing for the war on terror. That same year, the camp was redesignated by the National Guard Bureau as a Joint Maneuver Training Center, making Camp Atterbury the premier training center in the state.

Newlin said that by becoming a joint training center, Camp Atterbury has fallen in line with the Chief of National Guard Bureau's vision of conducting more joint operations. He said the ability of the camp to "train all components of the services here, and a number of them in joint roles, is part of our ability to adapt and remain viable."

In fact, Guard and Reserve personnel from all services use the camp's training ranges. And Air National Guard units from Indiana and neighboring Kentucky use it to fly sorties overhead and to practice equipment drops from C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. Local state and federal law enforcement authorities use the live-fire ranges to hone their rifle skills.

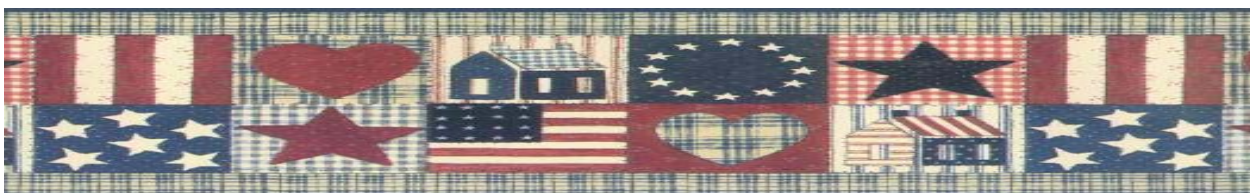
The Army decision to activate the camp also has meant more military construction dollars for renovations and other quality-of-life improvements. The camp's first commercial franchise, a Subway sandwich shop is set to open next week. It will be the first such franchise on a National Guard base.

Construction has also begun on an \$8 million battle simulation center that will enhance training, Newlin said. But what may make Camp Atterbury the NTC of the National Guard is the acquisition of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center. The sprawling facility, once used to treat people with disabilities, is less than 45 miles east of the camp, and is closing soon. It would cost the state upwards of \$40 million to destroy the facility and restore it for agricultural use.

However, Newlin said, Indiana National Guard leaders are hopeful that the ultimate urban warfare-training center could be created there and have put a proposal before the state legislature to do so.

"This would be 10 times the size of any CACTF that's out there," he said. "And it's going to allow us to replicate a more realistic environment for urban training. Instead of having a bunch of cookie-cutter buildings, all made of the same type of materials or facades of materials, you're actually going into a living, breathing city that is self-sustaining."

The residential facility has nearly 1,000 acres of land and some 70 buildings, including a five-story hospital, a minimum-security prison, a school, housing, administrative buildings and its own power station and water treatment plant. A kitchen facility there is capable of serving 4,500 meals three times a day.



Attterbury (Cont)

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been teaching his fellow actors Arabic words to make the training more authentic.

"I want to give you help," Mr. Al Shimray told the 983rd Soldiers as he approached them during the convoy exercise.

Sgt. Shane Sanderson, the platoon sergeant, asked him to back up, yelling above the jeering crowd that his Soldiers "will be out of your area in a minute" and to "please be patient, please give us room." Mr. Al Shimray said he saw the perplexed look on many Soldiers' faces during the exercise. Though it was just training, the gravity of the situation was clearly not lost on the participating Soldiers.

Nonetheless, Mr. Al Shimray was able to pull a big smile out of Sergeant Sanderson, who carried an unloaded M-4, a shorter version of the M-16A2 rifle. In between several loud outbursts in Arabic, Mr. Al Shimray jokingly repeated in a thick accent:

"Please don't shoot me. Please don't shoot me."



Joel Kay, special education music therapist with Clayton County Schools, leads the Adamson Middle School Car-olers in song during their annual holiday visit to First U. S. Army Headquarters at Fort Gillem, Ga. *Photo by Phil Manson*



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